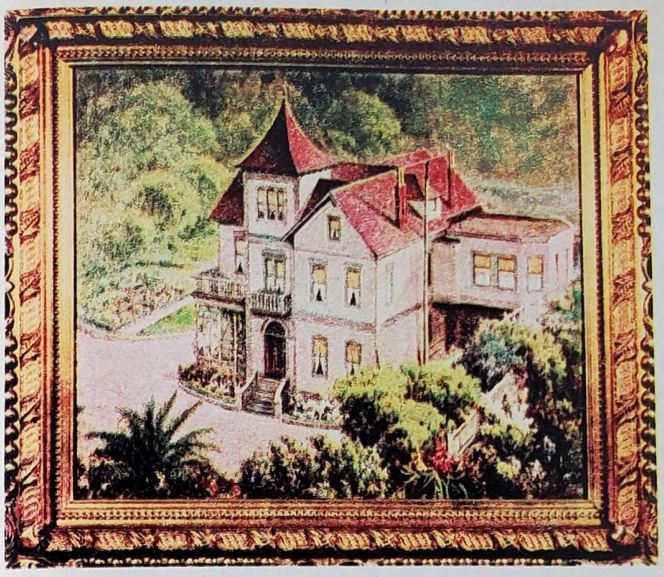
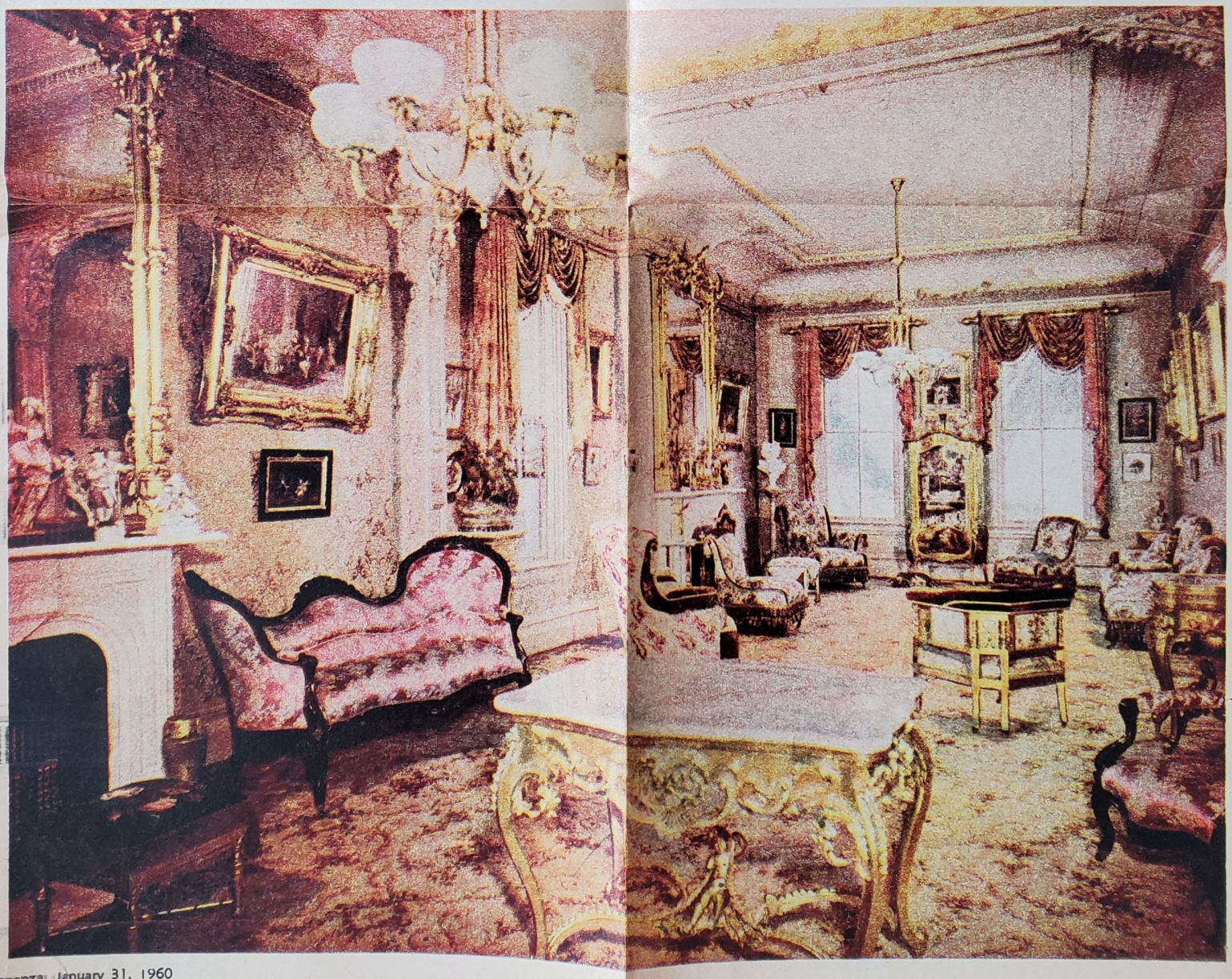
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE'S
Guide to
GOLDEN GATE PARK

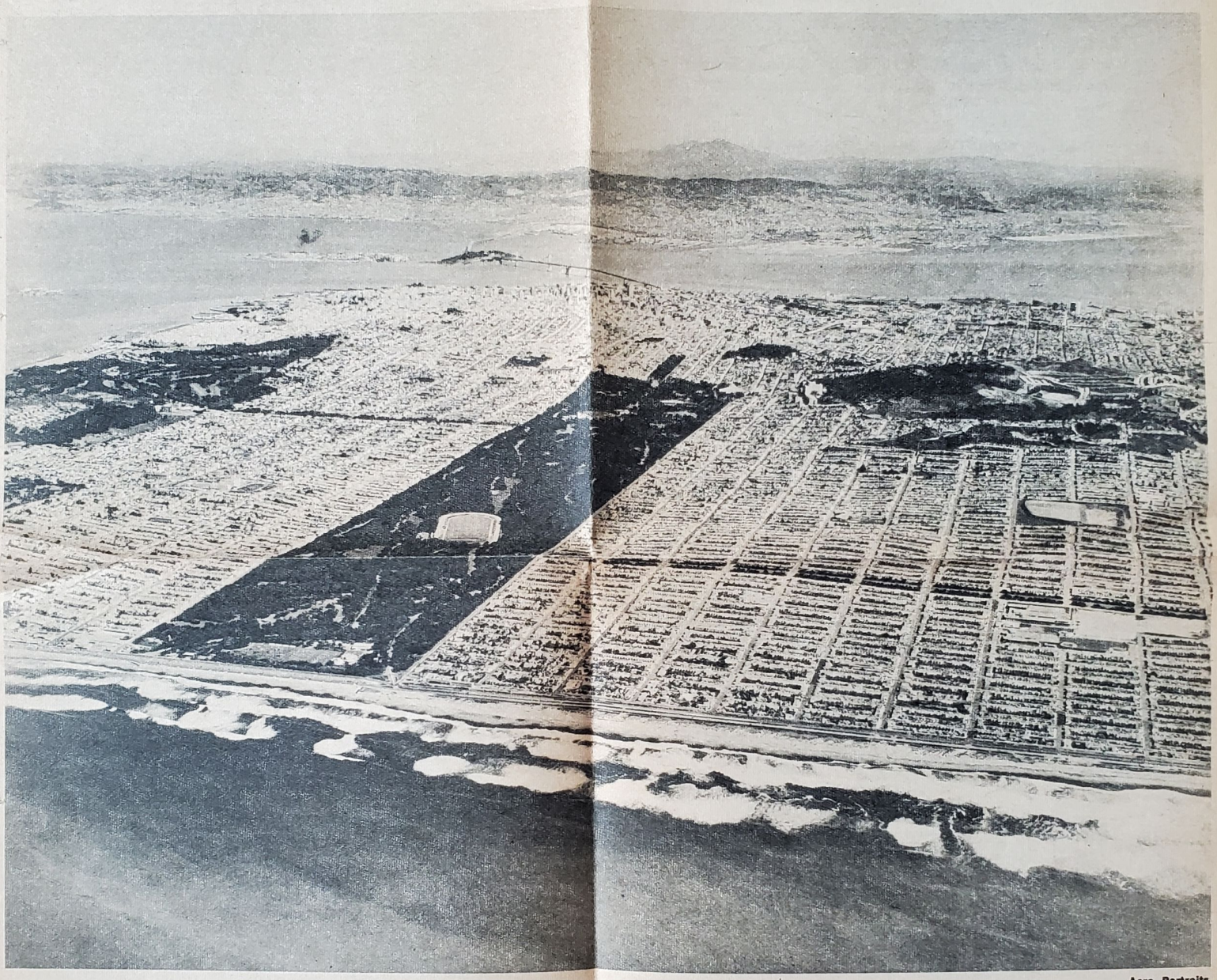
by Nes Young

ONLY TWO FAMILIES occupied the splendid example of Victorian architecture, depicted in the old painting at right, during its 95-year lifetime. Judge James McMillan Shafter built the turreted Russian Hill mansion in the 1860s, and sold it in 1895 to the family of C. C. Rohlff, founder of the Alaska salmon packing industry. To be razed within the next few weeks to make way for the Webb & Knapp-William Zeckendorff apartment tower destined to become the topmost elevation in San Francisco, the Rohlff mansion is making its final appearance on these pages. Two weeks ago the magnificent, original furnishings of these rooms were sold at auction, the entire estate having been bequeathed to charity after the recent death of Miss Ella Rohlff, the last surviving member of the family. The glittering charm of the parlor and the massively impressive dining room shown on the cover portray the stateliness, the graceful elegance and richness of this vanquished Victorian.





THE CITY'S STRIP OF GREENERY



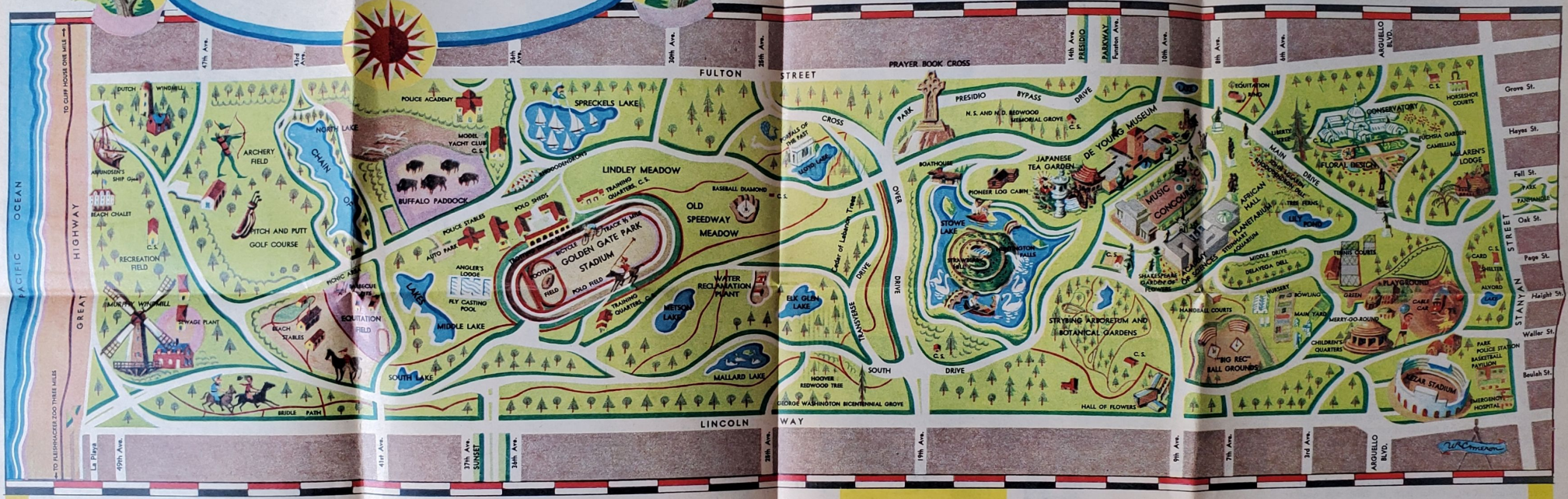
Aero Portraits

GOLDEN GATE PARK'S SIZE SHOWS UP FROM THE AIR

EVEN FOR THE EARTHBOUND, Golden Gate Park seems immense in size, stretching nine city blocks wide and 4½ miles long. But it isn't until you get up in the air that you realize how gigantic the park really is. There are 1017 acres of verdant green in the land old John McLaren recovered from the windswept sand dunes on the west slope of the city. This long, wide strip of greenery stands out bold and clear when viewed from a plane that wings in over the waves that lap the shoreline on the west.

San Francisco Chronicle Guide to GOLDEN GATE PARK

San Francisco's Playground, Golden Gate Park, Is a Unique Setting for Leisure and Learning



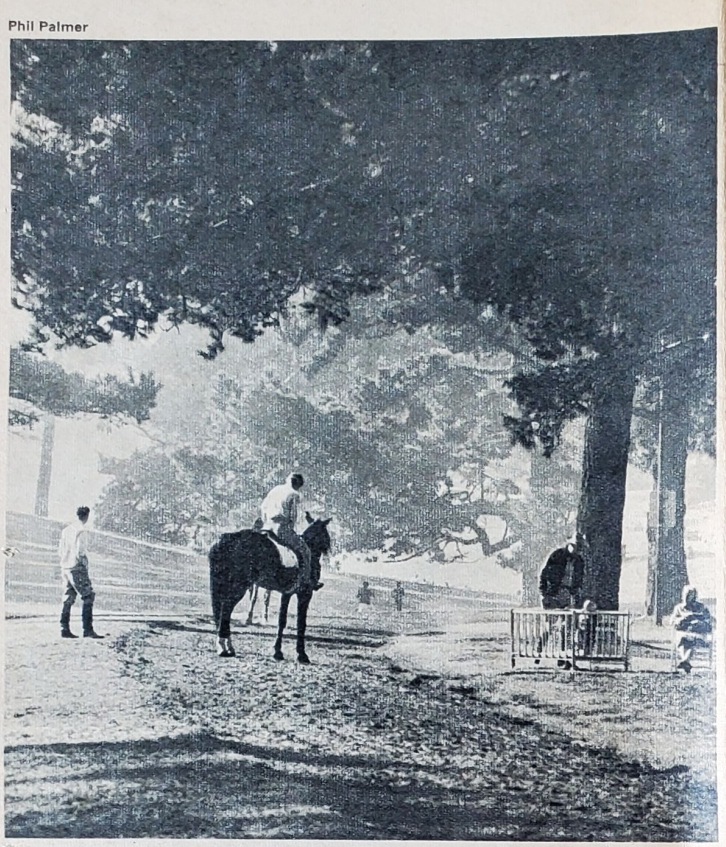
PERHAPS NOWHERE ELSE in the world are city dwellers so fortunate in the range of colorful choices offered them for relaxation and learning in a country setting as in the Golden Gate Park. Amateurs of gardening, art, music, sports or of simply lazing find in its 1000 acres of man-made meadows and lakes, museums and stadiums, something for all of them. Polo at the stadium; fly casting at the special pool; bowling on the greens, baseball, tennis, football on the many playing fields —these are but a few of the possibilities for sportsmen. For the horticultural lover, the park offers more than 5000 species of plants from all over the world; no less than 500 hybrids and species of rhododendrons, a collection unrivaled outside Kew Gardens; over 200 species of conifer and, crowning all, the tropical splendors of the Conservatory. The scientifically minded, and the curious, delight in the Academy of Sciences' exhibits of flora and fauna; the marvels of the sky at the Planetarium and the marvels of the ocean at the Aquarium; some 25,000 people visit the Academy buildings on an average summer week end. Across the Music Concourse the de Young Memorial Museum—the Nation's third most popular—attracts over a million people a year to its 64 galleries of European and American art. The Japanese Tea Garden, the model yacht clubhouse, the playgrounds for the young, the "Casino" for the elderly, the Sunday afternoon concerts—the list is almost endless. See for yourself.

John McLaren

TO JOHN McLAREN, a dour, stubborn Scot with a genius for bringing the countryside into the city, fell the main task of creating Golden Gate Park. In 1887, when the park was 16 years old, he succeeded William Hammond Hall, the first superintendent, and for the next 56 years ruled as the sometimes-contested but seldom over-ruled architect of the park's future. Despising titles, he liked to call himself "the boss gardener who conquered the sand," remembering his early success in anchoring the shifting wastelands (for which he imported a sand-loving grass) without which the park would never have blossomed. Always keenly aware that town people needed a park within reach of home, he fought off officials and nature to retain his ideal of perfection.

GOLDEN GATE PARK

Phil Palmer



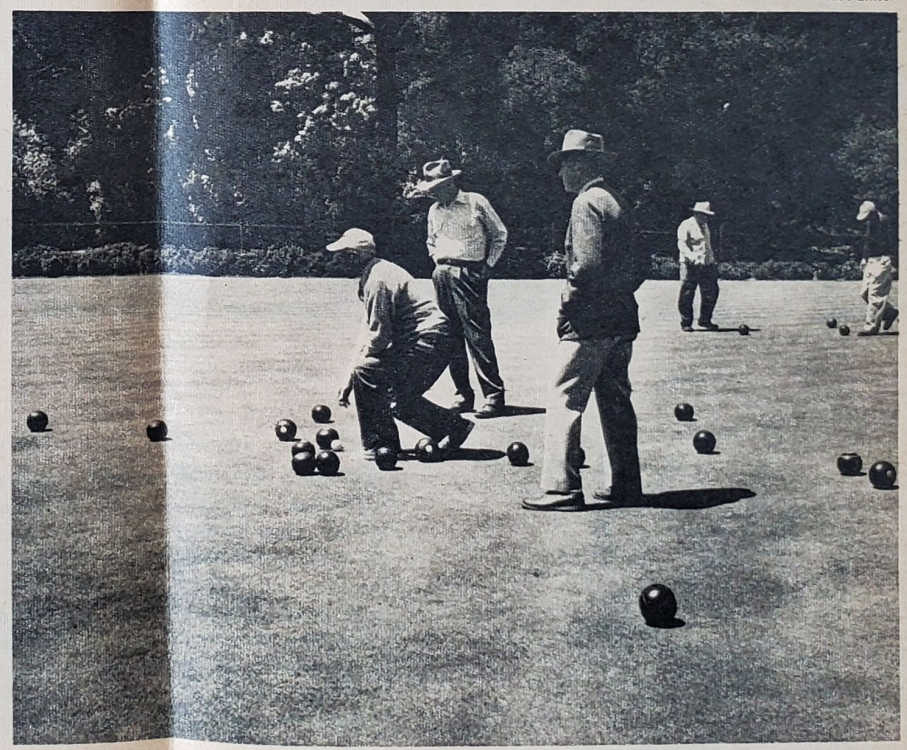
ONE WAY of enjoying the pleasures of sunny days in the park— ***seven miles of bridle paths meander through meadow and wood.***

Art Frisch

WATER CYCLING and feeding the ducks on one of the park's dozen artificial lakes are favorite children's pastimes.

THE PARK WITHOUT PEOPLE would be nothing. And people, the thousands who throng its paths and concourses on a typical Sunday afternoon, have amply vindicated the vision of its creators. For Golden Gate Park in its early days came under heavy fire from critics who described it, among other things, as the "largest and heaviest" white elephant San Francisco ever owned. (Cost of the land in 1868 was over $800,000.) To most people, of course, it was a foolish dream to attempt to grow trees and grass on shifting sands and turn wasteland into a place of pleasure. The task took many years of struggle, but despite the arduousness of the work the primary object for which the park was being created was never forgotten. Typical was John McLaren's blunt refusal to consider placing "keep off the grass" signs in the park. And one of the first things the master gardener planned was the children's playground. Today, though the park's early history may seem of little consequence, many thousands of people owe precious leisure hours to the planning of almost a century ago.

Phil Palmer



McLAREN was a keen bowls player and it was thanks to him that the first greens were laid out in the park. The game is perfectly suited for a warm afternoon.